

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING
OF THE
ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT AFFAIRS**

**Seventy-Fourth Session
March 2, 2007**

The Committee on Government Affairs was called to order by Chair Marilyn K. Kirkpatrick at 8:01 a.m., on Friday, March 2, 2007, in Room 3143 of the Legislative Building, 401 South Carson Street, Carson City, Nevada. Copies of the minutes, including the Agenda ([Exhibit A](#)), the Attendance Roster ([Exhibit B](#)), and other substantive exhibits are available and on file in the Research Library of the Legislative Counsel Bureau and on the Nevada Legislature's website at www.leg.state.nv.us/74th/committees/. In addition, copies of the audio record may be purchased through the Legislative Counsel Bureau's Publications Office (email: publications@lcb.state.nv.us; telephone: 775-684-6835).

COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:

Assemblywoman Marilyn Kirkpatrick, Chair
Assemblywoman Peggy Pierce, Vice Chair
Assemblyman Kelvin Atkinson
Assemblyman Bob Beers
Assemblyman David Bobzien
Assemblyman Jerry D. Claborn
Assemblyman Pete Goicoechea
Assemblyman Ruben Kihuen
Assemblyman Harvey J. Munford
Assemblyman James Settelmeyer
Assemblyman Lynn D. Stewart

COMMITTEE MEMBERS ABSENT:

Assemblyman Chad Christensen (Excused)
Assemblywoman Bonnie Parnell (Excused)
Assemblywoman RoseMary Womack (Excused)

GUEST LEGISLATORS PRESENT:

Assemblywoman Kathy McClain, Assembly District No.15



STAFF MEMBERS PRESENT:

Amber Joiner, Committee Policy Analyst
Scott McKenna, Committee Counsel
Emilie Reafs, Committee Secretary
Olivia Lloyd, Committee Assistant

OTHERS PRESENT:

Tim Tetz, Executive Director, State of Nevada Office of Veterans' Services
Michael E. Fischer, Director, State of Nevada Department of Cultural Affairs
Scott K. Sisco, Deputy Director, State of Nevada Department of Cultural Affairs
Tod B. Jennings, American Legion, Department of Nevada

[Call to order, Roll Call]

Chair Kirkpatrick:

We would like to open the hearing on Assembly Bill 162.

Assembly Bill 162: Provides for the establishment of and the transfer of certain abandoned property to the Nevada Veterans' Museum. (BDR 33-775)

We will call Assemblywoman McClain to the table, and if you have other speakers that would like to come up, we welcome them as well.

Assemblywoman Kathy McClain, Assembly District No. 15:

I have a bill, A.B. 162, and with me is Tim Tetz with the Veterans' Services Department, and Mike Fischer who is with the Department of Cultural Affairs. I want to say a few words about this. I am also the Chairperson of the Nevada Veterans' Commission and so I deal with these gentlemen all the time. Since we have some problems with the Veterans' Museum, maybe it is time the State stepped up to the plate and honored the veterans the way they should be honored.

We have approximately 300,000 veterans in Nevada and that number is growing because people are moving here and with the current global conflict, new veterans are coming home all the time. Apparently 62 of the 63 Legislators agreed with me because the biggest part of this bill is everyone who signed on, which makes me proud.

We have found a location to get one started. It will most likely not be the ultimate location and project that I would like to see, but at least it is a place where we can get started. That is why the Department of Museums [Cultural Affairs] is here. They are going to talk a little bit about the fiscal impact, but first I want to introduce Tim Tetz, who will give some background.

Tim Tetz, Executive Director, State of Nevada Office of Veterans' Services:
[Read from prepared statement, ([Exhibit C](#))]

Michael E. Fischer, Director, State of Nevada Department of Cultural Affairs:
We are here this morning on not quite such an emotional basis, but certainly with a stake in the game. The State already has seven museums with insufficient funds for marketing and exhibits, but when this proposal came along we thought it was a chance that would be a win-win situation. Many of you know that the Nevada State Museum and Historical Society in Las Vegas will move to the Springs Preserve site in the coming year.

The land lease for Lorenzi Park, where the museum is located now, requires a museum presence. We thought that honoring the veterans in that location allows us to move ahead. The initial plans were for an exhibit on Las Vegas history using some of the materials that we already have in our artifact collection, but honoring the veterans seems to be a more prudent and important task.

I provided a handout ([Exhibit D](#)) so you can see what the remodeled building and gallery space will look like. In addition to the museum, we will have a Cultural Affairs center for the first time serving the citizens of southern Nevada, Clark County, and Las Vegas.

The Nevada Arts Council, Historic Preservation, and other areas of our department will be there, but we consider it an important part of our task to do exactly what was presented earlier—have a veterans' museum. My father served in World War II in the Navy and my father-in-law has the same hearing problem from being right next to those 10 inch guns off of Iwo Jima, and the Gulf of Leyte. Those people's stories need to be told, but they need to be told with the professionalism and the dignity that those heroes deserve.

If this bill is approved and the necessary funds appropriated, we will be able to perform that task. We will not only seek artifacts from the privately run museums' collections, but also advertise within the State to get more. We would like to have the veterans come forward and bring those things out of the trunks of their cars or the trunks in their basements and attics.

We will use a professional museum designer and have professional, dignified museum exhibits that deal with the nature and essence of what those people did for our country. A museum curator, a museum attendant, and a custodian are minimal staffing and crucial to have this operate properly. Most importantly there are costs for exhibit development and marketing, but we do not want to just hang uniforms on the wall that look like we just left something there. We want [the exhibit] to honor these individuals. They honored us by risking their lives and serving our country. We need to honor them in a manner commensurate with what they did. My staff and I are available to answer any questions you may have. We think this is an important and good project for the State of Nevada.

Chair Kirkpatrick:

We have some people in Las Vegas who would like to testify, but we were not notified in time to set up the teleconference. They can send their testimony via facsimile machine.

Assemblyman Bobzien:

I have a question for Mr. Tetz. I appreciate and understand the dynamic of the private collections that are everywhere. I am still trying to figure out how to get my grandfather's KA-BAR knife across the country. He had served with the Marine Corps in Guadalcanal. I would also imagine that there are collections that are larger in scale and are not kept by the veteran him or herself nor by their family members. Are there larger collections that exist in Nevada that are private collections that we could bring into this effort?

Tim Tetz:

When we started researching a veterans' museum a little over a year ago, we reached out to try to find everybody who had some sort of a collection. The Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW) post in Elko has a collection and a museum of sorts in a room within their building. The State Museum has several different collections that rotate in and out of their service. We have a large collection of materials that are in a storage unit outside our Veterans' Home and we display pieces from that collection in our front entryway whenever we can. There has been a private museum in the Laughlin area operated by the owners of the Ramada Inn. It was in existence and then was taken down, and I believe it is back in existence, but its future is uncertain. Finally, there was another private museum run by Ed Gobel in a building in Las Vegas. That museum is no longer functioning and the people who donated collections to that museum have come to our office in attempts to get their collections back. The donors want to see the collections displayed. They do not want to lose possession of their collections because they are their personal collections. They also want to make sure that as many people as possible can see and learn from those collections.

So I think a veterans' museum with collections from across the State would allow us to take all of these pieces and put them together into one collection.

Assemblyman Bobzien:

I think that it is an important aspect to highlight that there is a trust involved and there would be a benefit in having a museum to honor the collections and memories of those who served.

Assemblyman Stewart:

Mrs. McClain, I think it is a marvelous idea and you have utilized the space at Lorenzi very well. Do we have a rough timetable from when we approve the funds to when this will be in operation?

Michael Fischer:

I would like to defer to Scott Sisco, our Administrative Services Officer, on that question. I would like to add one thing in response to Assemblyman Bobzien's question. The cultural material is important and collecting the material is important, but what becomes significant is the individual stories. I think that is what is going to make the museum come alive. I will now defer to Mr. Sisco.

Scott K. Sisco, Deputy Director, State of Nevada Department of Cultural Affairs:

I am the Administrative Services Officer for the Department of Cultural Affairs. To Mr. Stewart, if this bill is approved and if the funding is made available, our Las Vegas museum is anticipated to be complete about July or August 2008, at the latest. In the meantime we would be working with the Veterans Administration to start seeking out those collections and to start the process of entering into a contract. We had created this fiscal note with approximately \$200,000 of the estimated \$675,000 for developing the exhibit; \$200,000 in the Fiscal Year 2008 and the remaining \$475,000 in the second year. We would anticipate that the whole thing would be running in mid-to-late 2009.

Assemblyman Beers:

My father was one of those Marines who hopped the islands of the Pacific, starting in the Philippines all the way to Japan. He spent some time in the Iwo Jima where he got a Bronze Star. How are you reaching out to those veterans who have these private collections?

Assemblywoman McClain:

If you look behind me [indicates the VFW and American Legion members in the audience], this is our advertising group. The Veterans' Commission actually represents many of the veterans' organizations, and I understand that the Department of Museums has a marketing plan. I wanted to mention one thing about the fiscal impact. It is going to be seed money to get this project started.

In the interim I fully intend to go to veterans' organizations for help in finding some private donors because we are allowed to take donations. There are a lot of things that we can do in the meantime to get the word out, to make sure we get the right collection materials, and to get some financial help. There are a lot of options, and these things are not going to start happening for another five or six weeks when we start closing budgets.

Assemblyman Munford:

How much acknowledgement will be given to the African-American veterans? We know that at one time the military was segregated and was not integrated until the Truman presidency. Is there going to be a section designated for that? What direction are you going to take on this issue?

Michael Fischer:

Clear back to the Buffalo Soldiers, while not many African-Americans came to Nevada, many became cowboys. We will be color-blind in the sense that everyone will be honored; there is an issue there that needs to be addressed. We should have a section for this, and hopefully there are those who will come forward with their stories.

Assemblyman Munford:

I know from being a teacher, students are not really aware that the military was so divided in terms of race. Many African-American soldiers had to enlist—they could not be drafted—they had to volunteer. They thought of it as a vehicle for improving their lives.

Michael Fischer:

We will be sensitive to their stories; if you could help us by identifying people to bring those stories along, we would be grateful.

Assemblywoman McClain:

I was going to recruit you [Mr. Munford] for that. Historically, approximately 7 percent of our veterans have been female but that number has been growing. It is more like 40 percent now.

Assemblyman Claborn:

We want to honor and respect all of our armed services. This is a very good bill and I support it.

Assemblywoman Pierce:

There is a project on National Public Radio (NPR) where they are gathering oral histories of all kinds. Will there be an effort to gather oral histories? I think that

it is a wonderful way to make history relevant for people and make it come alive.

Michael Fischer:

I spoke earlier about making the story of the individuals come alive in their own words and with video. As many of the World War II veterans are reaching their end, they are starting to talk about their experiences. It is not only important, it is also time sensitive.

Chair Kirkpatrick:

You cannot put a price tag on history and the education of the younger generation. They have to know that there is more to life than iPods. I do not think that the fiscal note is even an issue. As a Girl Scout leader, I know that Girl Scouts are very active in the community and the veterans are always right there willing to include us, which brings back the concept of core community. I cannot believe that if anyone in this room walked into a veterans' luncheon that those veterans would not ask what they could do to help.

The museum will bring so much to our State; it will bring other groups from across the nation so we can bring the whole dynamic here. I am personally very excited and have a group of Girl Scouts that can help.

Assemblyman Beers:

For Assemblywoman McClain, I was going through the language in the bill and I did not see the funding mechanism in it. Do we need to add one or is that coming from somewhere else?

Assemblywoman McClain:

The way it works, it will be presented in their budget as an enhancement. It will be approved through the budget closings. As far as the donation part, it is not specific in this language because it is in the language that covers all of the museums.

Chair Kirkpatrick:

For clarification, Mr. Beers, you can go on the Internet and view the fiscal note, or we have one here.

Assemblyman Settlemeyer:

Section 2 establishes the ability to take the property that is currently abandoned and use those funds for the Nevada Veterans' Museum. This is why it is important to try and establish these private partnerships and to get private individuals to step forward and try to help. In that respect I am willing to donate to the cause.

Chair Kirkpatrick:

There is some public comment in favor, so I would like to call you up at this time.

Tod B. Jennings, American Legion, Department of Nevada:

I am a retired Master Sergeant, United States Air Force. I am going to read my statement. ([Exhibit E](#))

Chair Kirkpatrick:

Do I have anyone else who would like to speak in support of A.B. 162? Do I have anyone who is neutral? We received a fax from Clark County opposing A.B. 162, and I will read the names: Linda West Myers, Ursula Licon, Ralph Licon, Caryl Gobel, Sharon Gobel, Abbi Gobel, Edie Gobel, and Ed Gobel.

Thank you, Mrs. McClain, and I look forward to seeing you in the work session.

I would like to close the hearing on A.B. 162.

Is there any public comment? [There was none.]

[Meeting adjourned 8:36]

RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED:

Emilie Reafs
Committee Secretary

APPROVED BY:

Assemblywoman Marilyn K. Kirkpatrick, Chair

DATE: _____

EXHIBITS

Committee Name: Committee on Government Affairs

Date: March 2, 2007

Time of Meeting: 8:00 a.m.

Bill	Exhibit	Witness / Agency	Description
	A		Agenda
	B		Attendance Roster
A.B. 162	C	Tim Tetz, Executive Director, Office of Veterans' Services	Prepared Remarks
A.B. 162	D	Michael Fischer, Director, Department of Cultural Affairs	Conceptual Plan
A.B. 162	E	Tod B. Jennings, The American Legion	Prepared Remarks